



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
REEF Environmental Facility
Update on Community Activities
Sylacauga, Talladega County, Alabama

Number 1

October 2012

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Reef LLC facility located at 71 Twin Street, Sylacauga, Alabama was a centralized industrial waste water treatment facility. The facility was permitted to accept waste water and oily waste from other industries for treatment and discharge to a public operated treatment works (POTW) in Sylacauga. Shortly after the first waste deliveries began, local and state government officials received numerous odor complaints. Subsequent assessments identified unstable conditions relating of accumulating gases (organic and hydrogen sulfide) under a tarp/liner over the Biological Treatment Basin at the facility and an oily sheen being released from the facility as well as abandoned hazardous chemicals both on the facility grounds and in the onsite facility lab.

RESPONSE ACTIONS TO DATE

On October 1, 2012, Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) requested assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) Region 4 to investigate an oily sheen on Shirtee Creek next to the Site. Further investigation lead to the discovery of the tarp that was stressed and under pressure over the two equalization basins. An EPA On-Scene-Coordinator (OSC) was dispatched to the scene. A network of absorbent booms has been placed in and around Shirtee Creek to address the unpermitted surface discharges of oily wastewater from the facility. On-scene personnel continue to monitor the area around Shirtee Creek for adverse impacts to fish and other aquatic organisms. In addition, an air scrubber system was installed to alleviate the large bubble of gases underneath the tarp covering the wastewater basins. The scrubber system operated between October 5 and October 7, 2012 and removed approximately 170,000 cubic yards of gas from under the tarps. Offensive odors continue to be reported up to a two-mile radius of the site and air monitoring is ongoing on site and at seven locations throughout adjacent neighborhoods. Wind direction and ambient temperature affects the location, intensity, and persistence of the odor. The air monitoring operations are to ensure citizens are safe and are not being adversely impacted by the on-site response activities. Data from the air monitoring in the neighborhoods has not identified any concentrations that present any health hazards. The materials in the basins were treated to greatly reduce the amount of fugitive gases until the source material can be removed during the next cleanup phase. However, there will be residual odor releases throughout this process until our efforts are completed.

DESCRIPTION OF THREAT

The abandoned facility has several priority issues that will be addressed under a phased approach. The emergency response action was primarily addressing the trapped gases that exist under the tarps/liners over the two 3 million gallon treatment basins. The trapped gases total approximately 175,000 cubic feet and evidence indicates elevated levels of organics and hydrogen sulfide. Once the gases have been removed the basin material will be treated to reduce gas production.

NEXT STEPS

EPA is actively monitoring the ambient air in the community and is expediting the next phase of response efforts to treat and dispose of the basins of waste water and the source of odor at Reef Environmental. EPA will continue air monitoring during removal actions to ensure no unacceptable air concentrations impact nearby residents or worker safety and continue to mitigate waste oil contamination migrating off-site. EPA will also complete an inventory of onsite hazardous chemicals and initiate a cleanup to remove the material in the basins and other onsite hazards.

EPA invites **YOU to a **Community Meeting** on,
Tuesday, October 23, 2012, at the
J. Craig Smith Community Center
2 West 8th Street, Sylacauga, AL,
at 6:00 p.m.**

to discuss the on-going and future activities, next steps, and to address the issues and concerns of the Sylacauga community.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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